

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5013

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4209

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE IN SHUF AND BEIRUT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 4170, (B) BEIRUT 4171

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: TWO MORE PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN SHUF AND DEATH TOLL FOR AUGUST 25 BOMBING IN BEIRUT HAS RISEN TO EIGHT. KFUR FRONT ISSUED THREATENING COMMUNIQUE ON SHUF INCIDENTS, WHILE WALID JUMBLATT MADE SOMEWHAT MORE BALANCED STATEMENT. MORE CHRISTIAN RETALIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 25 TWO DRUZE WERE FOUND SHOT DEAD IN CAR NEAR DRUZE VILLAGE OF KAHR NABRAKH IN SHUF, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCE. THEY WERE PROBABLY VICTIMS OF CHRISTIAN RETALIATION FOR AUGUST 21 SHOOTINGS IN SHUF. ACCORDING TO UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF LEBANESE ARMY SOURCE, ABOUT TEN OTHER PEOPLE WERE KILLED AUGUST 25 IN RETALIATION IN SHUF.

3. DEATH TOLL FOR AUGUST 25 EXPLOSION IN
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MARTYR'S SQUARE HAS RISEN TO EIGHT, ACCORDING TO AN NAHAR. ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) HAS OFFICIALLY ADMITTED THREE DEAD AND 12 WOUNDED. NAMES OF VICTIMS PUBLISHED BY ADF INDICATE TWO CHRISTIANS AND ONE KURD KILLED, AS WELL AS TWO CHRISTIANS, SIX KURDS, THREE SHIA MUSLIMS AND ONE ARMENIAN WOUNDED.

4. ACCORDING TO MINISTRY OF DEFENSE SOURCES, SOME LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS STATIONED AT YARZE HAVE INDIVIDUALLY RETURNED TO HOME VILLAGES IN SHUF TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILIES. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCES, BOTH CHRISTIANS AND DRUZE HAVE BEEN MOVING WEAPONS INTO AREA SINCE KAMAL JUMBLATT'S ASSASSINATION MARCH 16, 1977.

5. SOURCES AT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAVE REPORTED THAT CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS ARE SUSPICIOUS OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF MUNIR TURBAY, WHO IS DRUZE (AND APPARENTLY INNOCENT OF ANY INVOLVEMENT IN SHUF INCIDENTS). SOLDIERS COMPLAIN THAT RELATIVE OF TURBAY WAS AMONG SUSPECTS ARRESTED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN AUGUST 21 SHUF KILLINGS, AND THAT TURBAY'S NIECE IS ACTIVIST IN PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP).

6. KFUR FRONT, AFTER MEETING AUGUST 25 IN NORTH LEBANON, ISSUED THREATENING STATEMENT THAT DESCRIBED SHUF INCIDENTS AS "CHALLENGE," WHICH FRONT WAS RESOLVED TO TAKE UP WITH "ALL MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL." STATEMENT ALSO CLAIMED THAT SHOOTINGS WERE "VIOLATION OF EXISTING PACTS" (I.E. CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS COVERING RELATIONS AMONG VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN LEBANON).

7. PSP SECRETARY GENERAL WALID JUMBLATT, WHO FINALLY RETURNED FROM EUROPE EVENING OF AUGUST 24, ISSUED
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SOMEWHAT MORE BALANCED BUT STILL FAR FROM HELPFUL STATEMENT. ON ONE HAND, HE CHARGED THAT KFUR FRONT WAS ONLY PARTY RESPONSIBLE FOR SHUF SHOOTINGS AND LABELED AS "PROVOCATIVE" ADF ARRESTS OF PEOPLE IN KAFR NABRAKH, WHERE VILLAGE RESIDENTS "HAD NO CONNECTION WHATSOEVER WITH INCIDENTS." ON OTHER HAND, HE REITERATED THAT "WE STAND WITH CO-EXISTENCE IN SHUF" AND PROMISED TO HELP AUTHORITIES DETERMINE WHO WAS GUILTY, PROVIDED THAT "SOLUTION IS BALANCED AND TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION."

8. COMMENT: CHRISTIANS RECALL THAT DRUZE KILLED OVER 100 PEOPLE AFTER JUMBLATT'S ASSASSINATION, BUT GOVERNMENT BROUGHT NOBODY TO JUSTICE. CHRISTIANS ALSO REMAIN VERY SCEPTICAL THAT GOVERNMENT WILL PUNISH ANYONE FOR PRESENT INCIDENTS. THUS, KFUR FRONT HAS ASSUMED PUBLIC STANCE EVEN MORE MILITANT THAN USUAL, AND MORE CHRISTIAN RETALIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE. END COMMENT.
PARKER

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